

CHURCH NEWS

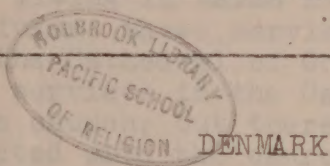
FROM THE NORTHERN COUNTRIES

Edited by
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Sigtuna, Sweden

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International Competition on Church Building.

The Danish Ministry of Church Affairs has arranged a competition on church building for architects, sculptors and painters from all over the world. The assignment is to design an Evangelical-Lutheran church in the industrial quarter of a modern big city, the total sum of prizes amounting to 100,000 Danish Crowns, the First Prize being at least 50,000 Crowns. The final projects should be the result of the combined efforts of architect, sculptor and artist, with particular emphasis on an artistic general impression.

The jury will be appointed partly by the Ministry of Church Affairs partly by international artists', architects' and sculptors' organizations. Entries must be submitted before September 1st this year and the competition is expected to attract many competitors. The church should be designed to accommodate 500-600 people and further particulars are available for the competitors.

The idea for the competition was conceived by the Minister of Church Affairs, Mrs. Bodil Koch, who is also a member of the jury. A number of people and institutions interested in the project have promised to provide the means for the realization of the plans.

Social Democratic Party Recognizes National Church.

In the outline for a new Party constitution just published by the Danish Social Democratic Party the demand for a separation of State and Church hitherto claimed by the Party has been struck out, the Party thus approving - though only indirectly - of the arrangement with a National Church.

The present Party platform dates from as far back as 1913, at which time the leaders of the Social Democratic Party were firm advocates of a separation between State and Church. To-day the position is different. The Party no longer regards Church and Christianity as "reactionary relics" and many Churchmen are actively engaged in the work of the Social Democratic Party. In spite of this the new Party constitution, nevertheless, avoids any direct mentioning of the Lutheran National Church. It says only: "Freedom of belief, of thought and of speech is the prerequisite of the full personal development of the individual person." But the omission may be taken as a de facto recognition of the status

of the National Church, this interpretation being confirmed by the Minister of Justice, Mr. Hans Hækkerup, who, in a statement dealing with the new constitution, emphasizes that his Party would consider it unfortunate if the Church were separated from the State.

Danish-Swedish Church Co-operation.

The Cathedral of Copenhagen and the Sct. Petri Church in Malmö, the town directly opposite Copenhagen on the Swedish side of the Sound, have entered into co-operation with each other. For some years Danish services for Danes living in Malmö have been conducted in the Sct. Petri Church and in the future these services will be conducted by the ministers employed at the Cathedral of Copenhagen. There will be no corresponding Swedish services in the Cathedral, as the Capital already possesses a Swedish church; but there are plans for mutual visits of young people connected with the churches and other forms for exchange visits across the frontier.

Sct. Petri Church and the Cathedral of Copenhagen, as it appeared before the big fire in 1728, were sister churches, having been erected in the Middle Ages by the same architect.

FINLAND

Debate on Ban on Monasteries and Convents.

The Finnish Act. of 1922 on Religious Liberty guarantees the religious liberty for everybody, i.e. people are free to join any religious community they like, although the Lutheran and Orthodox Churches, in their capacity of National Churches, receive State subsidies and execute certain State functions. There is one restriction, however, in as much as the law does not permit any order of monks or nuns to be founded nor new monasteries or convents to be established.

The daily paper "Hufvudstadsbladet" raises the question whether this rule might not be amended, asking, among others, Mr. Armo Nokkala, Member of the Ecclesiastical Board, about his views. He has answered that in his opinion an amendment is neither necessary nor desirable. Of course the old Orthodox monasteries, all of them now situated at Heinövesi, shall be allowed to continue to exist, but a monastery or a convent is an unnatural feature, so to speak, in a Lutheran scenery, he feels.

Dr. Jarl Gallén, Ph.D., a Roman Catholic, feels that the ban on monasteries is part of an antiquated legislation and detrimental to the reputation of Finland as a free nation.

There are roughly 2,000 Roman Catholics in Finland.

Thought-Provoking Remarks by Bishop at Prorogation of Parliament.

On the prorogation of Parliament a divine service was held in the Suurkirkko (Storkyrkan) on January 31st in which the President of the Republic and Members of Parliament and Government took part. The sermon was delivered by Bishop Elis Gulin, Tampere (Tammerfors) who, among other things, exhorted the Members to co-operate for the good of country and nation. He mentioned the air crash at Kvevlav, in which 25 people lost their lives owing to the pilots being intoxi-

of the National Church, this interpretation being confirmed by the Minister of Justice, Mr. Hans Haskerup, who, in a statement dealing with the new constitution, emphasizes that his Party would consider it unfortunate if the Church were separated from the State.

Danish-Swedish Church Co-operation.

The Cathedral of Copenhagen and the St. Peter Church in Malmø, the town directly opposite Copenhagen on the Swedish side of the Sound, have entered into co-operation with each other. For some years Danish services for Danes living in Malmø have been conducted in the St. Peter Church and in the future these services will be conducted by the ministers employed at the Cathedral of Copenhagen. There will be no corresponding Swedish services in the Cathedral, as the Cathedral already possesses a Swedish church, but there are plans for mutual visits of young people connected with the churches and other forms for exchange visits across the frontier.

St. Peter Church and the Cathedral of Copenhagen, as it appeared before the fire in 1728, were sister churches, having been erected in the Middle Ages by the same architect.

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The daily paper "Helsingfors Tidning" raises the question whether this rule might not be amended, asking, among others, Mr. Arvo Nopola, Member of the Dietetic Council, about his views. He has answered that in his opinion an amendment is neither necessary nor desirable. Of course the old Orders, monasteries, all of them now situated at Helsingfors, shall be allowed to continue to exist, but a monastery or a convent is an anachronistic feature, so to speak, in a Lutheran society, he feels.

Mr. Jari Gallén, Ph.D., a Roman Catholic, feels that the ban on monasteries is part of an antiquated legislation and detrimental to the reputation of Finland as a free nation.

There are roughly 2,000 Roman Catholics in Finland.

Thomson-Provostia/Romark by Bishop at Proclamation of Parliament.

On the proclamation of Parliament a divine service was held in the Church of St. George's on January 21st in which the President of the Republic and Members of Parliament and Government took part. The sermon was delivered by Bishop Eino Salo, Tampere (Tammerfors), among other things, exhorted the Members to co-operate for the good of country and nation. He mentioned the six years at Kivijärvi in which 25 people lost their lives owing to the pilots being intro-

ated, as an example of a general decline and urged constituents as well as Members to do penance. The Bishop emphasized the respect due to Members of Parliament because of the grave responsibility connected with their task. "We are grateful for much, but sometimes your messages disconcert rather than encourage us", Bishop Gulin said, doing nothing, moreover, to hide the fact that politicians in the Capital had offended against the 8th as well as the 1st Commandment.

Finland Ought to Increase the Help to Developing Countries.

In a lecture on his return from a visit to India in January the Finnish Baptist minister, Rev. Alvar Sundell, M.P., strongly advocated increased aid to the developing countries. "Gratitude for the progress achieved in our own country puts us under the obligation to lend a hand to the countries that are really in need and where any help to make them able to help themselves is a crying necessity", he said, among other things.

Mr. Sundell also referred to a statement by the Speaker, Mr. Fagerholm, at the convocation of Parliament in which he recommended increased Finnish aid to developing countries. "Our country, in particular, which has received so much humanitarian assistance in time of need should now have an opportunity of returning such help by taking more active part in the international relief work", the Speaker said in his address.

Fewer Resignations from the National Church..

The number of people who have resigned from the Lutheran National Church in Finland has gone down considerably in 1960 as compared with 1959. According to statistics for the three biggest towns which have just been published 1,478 people resigned from the Church in Helsinki (Helsingfors) in 1960 as against 3,220 in 1959; in Tampere (Tammerfors) there were 475 resignations as against 1,539; and in Turku (Åbo) 481 as against 1,330.

At the same time the number of people rejoining the Church has increased. In Helsinki this figure went up from 569 in 1959 to 748 in 1960; in Tampere from 186 to 266; and in Turku from 160 to 171.

This conspicuous change is considered, among other things, to be connected with the fact that Church taxes since 1960 have been collected together with other personal taxes while they were previously levied independently of the others.

Orthodox Seminary to be Moved to Kuopio.

In an interview in the paper "Uusi Suomi" the new Archbishop of the Orthodox Church in Finland, Archbishop Paavali, has revealed that the Orthodox seminary will be moved to Kuopio, which is now the centre of the Church. In this connection the Archbishop expressed the wish that the higher theological training of Orthodox priests, which at present must be had in Paris and Greece, might at least be started on in Finland. He advocated the establishment of a special Orthodox section at the proposed East-Finnish university. The Archbishop, finally, would like a small monastery to be established in connection with the Archbishop's residence at Kuopio.

Week of Religious Literature.

From March 19th - 26th a "Week of Religious Literature" will take place in Finland. The Week is arranged by the "Agricola Society", the motto this time being "The Book and Our Responsibility". As this year is both the centenary of the death of the revivalist preacher Lars Levi Laestadius and the centenary of the birth of the founder of the Evangelical Movement Fredrik Gabriel Hedberg, the programme of events in connection with the Week includes, among other things, lectures on these two great men in the Finnish Church.

Unusual Modern Church Dedicated in Hyvinkää (Hyvinge).

Bishop Martti Simojoki recently dedicated a most unusual modern church at Hyvinkää (Hyvinge). The architect, Mr. Aarno Ruusuvuori, who has designed the church, has based his design on the old, simple form of the triangle. The main features are two triangles of which the larger constitutes the interior of the church and the smaller an entrance hall, a vestry and other rooms. The walls, too, call to mind the triangular form. The altar is illuminated by a strong light from above, regular flood-light projectors being employed as the source of light in the dark season.

Religious News Journal on Television.

From February 23rd the commercial television corporation in Finland "Tesvisio" will be televising a religious news journal which is to take place every last Thursday in the month. The programme will be prepared by the photographer Mr. T.V. Nyman, who is also responsible for the transmissions on Sunday morning of divine services and Sunday school.

NORWAY

The Church Sends Young Farmers to Africa.

The Organization for Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees of the Church of Norway has plans of establishing five model farms in some West African state in order to help the population in this way to learn better and more suitable methods for producing food-stuffs. This organization has just advertised for a leader of the enterprise and, having found him, plans to send him on a visit to various West African states before deciding on the state in which to carry out the project. The plan is to employ three Norwegians with agricultural and horticultural qualifications on each of the model farms.

A special Committee to go into the matter was set up by the Organization for Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees after the Bishops' Conference at its meeting in October last year had resolved unanimously to support the scheme. Chairman of the Committee is Mr. Jakob Modalski, Managing Director. He has been in touch with the Food and Agriculture Organization, the Lutheran World Federation, and various missionaries on the matter, the Committee intending to work in close contact with other relief organizations as well as with the authorities of the state decided upon when the project, as may be hoped is launched in a not too distant future.

A Norwegian graduate in agriculture, who also is a veterinary surgeon, has been consecrated as a missionary and sent out to Formosa by the Norwegian Missionary Alliance where he is to start an agriculture project among the hill tribes. The undertaking will be financed by American funds. He is the first graduate in agriculture in Norway to be consecrated for missionary work.

Where to Find a Joseph?

We need a Joseph who, in a humane and sensible way, could solve the problem of surplus stocks of food in wealthy countries in such a way that the starving masses among our fellow men might benefit from them, the Christian daily paper in Oslo "Vårt Land" writes in a leader. It seems unpardonable to the paper that, for instance, Norway is wondering how to avoid an unwanted surplus production in agriculture while at the same time millions of people are starving, and the paper advertises for a Joseph who, on an international level, through the United Nations Organization, might superintend the necessary distribution. But the various countries themselves must, likewise, find each their own Joseph to see to it that the help to the needy countries reaches its destination and is distributed in the right way.

A New Diocese?

In his last annual report to the Government Department for Church and Education before his being retired on account of age, Bishop Ragnvald Indrebø, Bjørgvin (Bergen) raised the question of a division of the Diocese which for the last 340 years has had the same boundaries and in which a great increase of population has taken place. The Bishop does not advance any particular plan for a division, but in an interview in the Christian daily paper in Oslo "Vårt Land" he intimates that parts of the Dioceses of Bjørgvin (Bergen) and Nidaros (Trondheim) might constitute a new diocese for Møre and Romsdal.

Efforts for Having a Woman Minister Appointed.

The women associations of the Norwegian town of Ålesund have decided to approach the Church Department with a request for the appointment of a woman minister in the town, provided there are any women applicants for the vacancy of assistant curate. At the same time the women's associations, through the Women's Council, will appeal to women theologians to apply for the vacancy.

The reason for this appeal is the fact that there were no applicants at all when the vacancy was first advertised. So far no woman has been appointed minister in the Norwegian Lutheran National Church.

However, the 59-years old Mrs. Ingrid Bjerkås has applied for three vacant livings in the Diocese of North Hålogaland. Bishop A. Wiig, Tromsø, has declared himself willing to ordain women.

New Ecumenical Youth Conference in Norway.

Again this year the Institute for Ecumenical Contact in Norway, Head of which is Dr. Peder Borgen, has arranged an international ecumenical youth conference which is to be held in August at the Baptist school at Stabekk and may accommodate 30 people. So far 15 members are expected from Germany and negotiations are going on for American representation.

A Norwegian graduate in agriculture, who also is a veterinarian surgeon, has been considered as a missionary and sent out to Norway by the Norwegian Missionary Alliance where he is to start an agricultural project among the ill tribes. The undertaking will be financed by American funds. He is the first graduate in agriculture in Norway to be consecrated for missionary work.

Where to Find a Joseph?

We need a Joseph who, in a human and sensible way, could solve the problem of feeding a billion of people in a few years. In such a way that the starving masses among our fellow men might benefit from them, the Christian daily paper in Oslo "Vårt Land" writes in a leader. It seems unreasonable to the paper that, for instance, Norway is working now to avoid an unwanted surplus production in agriculture while at the same time millions of people are starving, and the paper advises for a Joseph who, on an international level, through the United Nations Organization, might superintend the necessary distribution. But the various countries themselves must, likewise, find each their own Joseph to see to it that the help to the needy countries reaches its destination and is distributed in the right way.

A New Diocese?

In his last annual report to the Government Department for Church and Education before his return to the country of his birth, Bishop Rognvald Indrebo, Bishop of Bergen, raised the question of a division of the Diocese which for the last 240 years has had the same boundaries and in which a great increase of population has taken place. The Bishop does not advance any particular plan for a division, but in an interview in the Christian daily paper in Oslo "Vårt Land" he indicates that parts of the Diocese of Bergen (Bergen) and Møre (Møre) might constitute a new diocese for Møre and Romsdal.

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New Evangelical Youth Conference in Norway.

Again this year the Institute for Evangelical Contact in Norway, Head of which is Dr. Peter Rogned, has arranged an international evangelical youth conference which is to be held in Ålesund at the Baptist School of Stabæk and may accommodate 80 people. So far 15 members are expected from Germany and negotiations are going on for American representation.

The main theme of the conference will be "Living Together in a Modern World". The first youth conference arranged by the newly established Institute took place last year. The Institute has no official ecumenical status, but works in co-operation with various Lutheran and Free Church youth organizations.

SWEDEN

Swedish-Scottish Theological Conference.

The first Swedish-Scottish theological conference will take place at Sigtuna from April 4th - 7th. From old days the Lutheran National Church of Sweden has had connections with the Scottish Presbyterian Church, and now Archbishop Gunnar Hultgren has invited a Scottish delegation to visit Sweden. It will be headed by Mr. Burleigh, Moderator of the Church of Scotland, and among the delegates will be two of Scotland's most prominent theologians, Professor Torrance and Professor Tindal, both Edinburgh.

Topics for discussion will be "Church and State", to be introduced by Mr. Burleigh and Bishop Josefson; "Inter-Communion and Church Discipline", to be opened by Professor Torrance and Professor Andrén; and "Modern Evangelization" with Dr. Dryburgh and Dr. Helge Brattgård as first speakers. The Swedish delegates are looking forward with interest to the debate on the first topic in particular. Bishop Josefson is a member of the Commission set up by the Swedish Government on the relations between State and Church, the Commission being expected to propose a plebiscite on the matter.

Less Alcohol in Wine Used for the Eucharist.

A sometimes rather heated debate in Sweden during the past year on the percentage of alcohol in the wine used for Holy Communion has resulted in the Bishops of the Lutheran National Church having decided to advocate the use of a less alcoholic wine which will be on sale from July 1st. This decision meets the wishes of the Temperance Movement which maintains that even a very small percentage of alcohol in the wine may cause a relapse in the case of a former alcoholic.

The Church Contributes to Collection in Aid of Developing Countries.

The "Svenska Kyrkohjälpen" (Organization of the Church of Sweden for Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees) and the "Lutherhjälpen" (Committee of the Swedish Section of the Lutheran World Federation for World Service) have each contributed 250,000 Swedish Crowns to the largescale collection going on at present under the name of "Sweden Helps" and arranged by the Central Committee for Swedish Technical Assistance. The money will be used for a vocational school in Tanganyika.

Ecumenical Church Visiting Tour in Lund.

In connection with the ecumenical Week of Prayer in January a so-called "Church Visiting Tour" was arranged in Lund. Those taking part met in the Cathedral crypt for a Lutheran devotional service, proceeding from there to the church of the Swedish Mission Covenant

The main theme of the conference will be "Living Together in a Modern World". The first youth conference arranged by the newly established Institute took place last year. The Institute has no official ecclesiastical status, but works in co-operation with various Lutheran and Free Church youth organizations.

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Topics for discussion will be "Church and State", to be introduced by Mr. Burleigh and Bishop Jansson; "Inter-Communion and Church Disunion", to be opened by Professor Torrance and Professor Anderson; and "Modern Evangelization" with Dr. Dyrberg and Dr. Helge Brattberg as first speakers. The Swedish delegates are looking forward with interest to the debate on the first topic in particular. Bishop Jansson is a member of the Commission set up by the Swedish Government on the relations between State and Church, the Commission being expected to propose a plan for the future.

Less Alcohol in Wine Used for the Eucharist.

A somewhat rather heated debate in Sweden during the past year on the percentage of alcohol in the wine used for Holy Communion has resulted in the House of the Lutheran National Church voting 140-100 to advocate the use of a less alcoholic wine which will be on sale from July 1st. This decision came in the midst of the Temperance Movement which maintains that even a very small percentage of alcohol in the wine may cause a relapse in the case of a former alcoholic.

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Evangelical Church Visited Town in India.

In connection with the ecclesiastical week of prayer in January a so-called "Church Visitation Tour" was arranged in India. Those taking part met in the cathedral crypt for a Lutheran Evangelical service, proceeding from there to the church of the Swedish Mission Movement.

Church where there were singing, scripture reading and prayers. Next came visits to the Roman Catholic Chapel of St. Thomas and the Methodist Church, the members joining in intercessions in both places. - This is the first, but probably not the last "Ecumenical Church Visiting Tour" to be arranged in Lund.

Pentecostal Missionaries in Dangerous Situation in the Kivu Province.

The Swedish Pentecostal Mission employs some 30 missionaries in the Kivu Province in the Congo and during the unrest there they have been in a very dangerous situation. There are also Norwegian and American missionaries in the same region. The white missionaries have been isolated, but a Swedish missionary, Gösta Palmerts from Ruanda-Urundi, has managed to get victuals through to them across the disturbed areas. Two Swedish women missionaries have arrived in Ruanda-Urundi from the Kivu Province after the Swedish representation had taken up the matter of the safety of the missionaries with the Kivu authorities. One of the Swedish missionaries at Lemera, Ingmar Blom, has been maltreated by Congolese troops.

8,000 German Children Having Visited Sweden.

Since 1956 the Swedish Mission Covenant Church and the Baptist Church have in common arranged a stay in Swedish homes for no less than 8,000 German children who needed it. The work will continue this summer and the Baptists are counting on turning a farm at Arbrå, which has been presented to their youth organization, into a colony for some of the German children.

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Antiochian Missionaries in Danang Province in the Kivu Province.
The Swedish Antiochian Mission employs some 30 missionaries in the Kivu Province in the Congo and during the winter there they have been in a very dangerous situation. There are also Norwegian and American missionaries in the same region. The white missionaries have been isolated, but a Swedish missionary, Gösta Palmertz from Ruanda-Urundi, has managed to get through to them across the disturbed areas. Two Swedish women missionaries have arrived in Ruanda-Urundi from the Kivu Province after the Swedish representation had taken up the matter of the safety of the missionaries with the Kivu authorities. One of the Swedish missionaries at Lemera, Ingmar Blom, has been maltreated by Congolese troops.

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